PowerPoint Slide Design 101

Overarching Guidelines
- Do not let PowerPoint dictate your content or presentation.
- PowerPoint should *support* and *enhance* the vocal delivery, not overwhelm or distract from it.
- Make sure images, templates, and color scheme reflect your topic, your organization, and you as a professional and as the presenter.

Visual Elements
- **Background**
    - Templates should be relevant to your topic.
    - Dark backgrounds are more formal, good for large audiences or presentation spaces.
    - Light backgrounds are less formal, good for small groups.

- **Color**
    - Use consistent color schemes in charts, graphs, template, and text.
    - Chart colors are customizable in PowerPoint – right-click the chart/graph, select "Format Data Series," select Fill, and choose the appropriate color.

- **Text**
    - Find balance between enough text for memory cues, but not so much that the audience is reading along or reading ahead.
    - "3-second rule," think of slide text as billboard text.
    - Sans serif fonts like Arial, Verdana, Calibri are better for reading on screen.

- **Images**
    - Use photos when possible to add credibility and polish.
    - Images need to serve a specific purpose in the presentation.
    - Search Microsoft Office for "photographs" only, or try Flickr Creative Commons (http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/) to find images that can be used for free as long as the owner is credited in the slide.

Arrangement
- **Contrast:** Bold headlines and key words to draw attention to the most important elements of the slide
- **Flow:** Arrange content from top to bottom, left to right. Multiple alignments (centered text, right-aligned text) give the viewer's eye too many starting points on a slide.
- **Hierarchy:** Use bullets and indentations to designate points and subpoint.
- **Whitespace:** Leaving clear whitespace on a slide gives the eyes places to rest and reduces visual strain.